DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 031 718 CG 004 158

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Problems of Culturally Different Youth in College.

American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C.

Pub Date Apr 69

Note-14p.; Paper presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, March 30--April 3, 1969.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.80

Descriptors-College Curriculum, College Environment, College Freshmen, College High School Cooperation, College Placement, College Students, Culturally Disadvantaged, *Disadvantaged Youth, Negro Students, *Student Adjustment, *Student College Relationship, *Student Needs, *Student Welfare, Youth Programs

Presently, college and university recruitment efforts are heavily concentrated towards attracting culturally different youth in general and black students in particular, for enrollment in a two year or four year degree oriented program. What happens to the student once he is on campus, however, appears to be of considerably less concern. It has been the policy for the past two years of the Upward Bound central staff, to visit those students who are attending college. The purposes, including reinforcing the students self-concept and strengthening his self confidence are given. The primary objective is to modify the student's fear of failure. In discussing interviews, specific student problems are presented. Specific problems of students in general include: (1) differences instead of similarities are stressed, (2) unrealistic scheduling of classes, (3) inability to communicate, and (4) fear of failure. Recommendations to help these students are: (1) emphasize similarities, (2) implement strong "compensatory" support programs, (3) initiate pre-college programs, and (4) help students in planning and accepting long range goals. (Author/KJ)

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PROBLEMS OF CULTURALLY DIFFERENT YOUTH IN COLLEGE*

Problem:

Presently, college and university recruitment efforts are heavily concentrated towards attracting culturally different youth in general and black students in particular for enrollment in a two year or four year degree oriented program. Special services are continuously being implemented to assist with selection procedures, while adequate financial assistance is readily made available in proportion to the evidence of student need.

What happens to the student once he is on campus, however, appears to be of considerably less concern. Consequently, the intended purpose is instantly confronted with contagious confusion and deplorable defeat as the student's earlier fear of failure becomes reinforced and fortified to the extent that it becomes quite evident "they have us here but they neither desire or expect us to graduate!"

Purpose:

This paper is the result of a continuous effort to reflect consistency in the accountability and progression of those Upward Bound students who have successfully completed the Wayne State program and are now completing their freshman or sophomore year of college. Further, to identify specific problems and areas of concern which so frequently alienate and antagonize those so

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* Presented by Charles E. Gordon, Wayne State University, at the April, 1969 American Personnel and Guidance Association in Las Vegas.

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regarded as culturally different youth in their effort to make the achievement of a college degree a reality rather than just another bad dream.

Procedure:

It has been the policy for the past two years, of the Upward Bound central staff to visit those students who are attending college. This procedure, of course, is written into the program proposal. The purposes for so doing are as follows:

1. To reinforce the student's concept of self and strengthen his self confidence by continuously and constructively reminding each student that somebody cares, while encouraging them to keep in touch and above all to keep the faith.
2. To determine the extent that the "Compensatory Support Program Concept" is being implemented and consequently, the degree of its effectiveness towards keeping in touch and assisting culturally different youth, once they become part of the campus program.
3. To establish a "campus contact," (Dean of Students, Director of Admissions, Director of Special Projects, or an Admissions Counselor) who becomes directly involved in assisting each Upward Bound student through the adjustment period of being a college freshman and usually the first in his or her family to attend a college or university. Further, to acquaint each student with a specific member of the faculty who is available to discuss and offer sincere and practical solutions to the problems and concerns with which they become confronted.

4. To keep the parent informed about the student's progress and general welfare, as many students write or call home on infrequent occasions. Moreover, most parents of Upward Bound students are without dependable transportation and therefore seldom visit the respective campus.

5. To become personally acquainted with college admissions and financial aid personnel, while gaining further insight into their requirements, procedures and specific techniques as designed to assist the student once he becomes a member of the college or university family.

6. To review and advise on class schedules and number of hours the student is pursuing as a first effort. Moreover, to remind the student of the "add and drop" procedures, the necessity of keeping in touch with the campus contact and to encourage verbal exchange with upper classmen regarding instructors and class requirements before they register for a particular course.

In all of the above, a primary objective is to modify the student's fear of failure; caused, in part, as a result of frequently being the first in his family to complete high school and most always the first to attend a college or university.

In planning for a college visitation arrangements are made with the assistance of the "campus contact," for a specific room to be available and all students are notified of the day and the hours in which our staff representative will be on campus and available to talk with students as

they are able to arrange to be free. A letter to each student is also mailed from our office in advance of the visit.

Once on campus, we visit with each student individually and collectively review their progress and problems. As discussed, we also meet with admissions representatives and the Dean of Students. Here, we discuss with these faculty members and other members of the academic and administrative staff the progress of our students and discuss mutual observations as to what can be done by the students or the institution to improve the student's progress.

In looking back at the very first visit to a college or university, neither Del Hopkins, Director of the Wayne State program, or myself were very certain of what we might find. Fifty-four students had just completed our program with ninety-six percent enrolling in the college or university of their choice. Twenty of those students had graduated from high school with a "D" average, thirty with a "C" average and two students earned a "B" average.

Central Michigan University is quite a long distance from Detroit. It seems even longer when the trip is made in a Volkswagon and the two passengers are both over six feet tall. As if adding insult to injury, the weather man refused to cooperate and the combination of wind and rain did not make the task of keeping the VW on course very easy.

Racing through our mind on frequent occasions, usually when we were almost blown off course, was the thought that perhaps the trip was not really necessary. After all, we had only one student enrolled at C.M.U. True, we

would leave Central and visit Ferris State College which was about an hours drive south and had recently become the new home of twelve Upward Bound graduates...but was this kind of follow-up really necessary?

The answer was soon to be discovered; for upon arriving on campus at C.M.U., and finding the Office of Dr. Austin Buchanan, Director of Admissions, we also found the reason for our presence. Arnold had been properly notified and was waiting, as per our request, in the conference room. Seeing the appreciative look on his face as Mr. Hopkins and I walked in, and watching as he immediately stood to extend his hand in sincere greeting, left us with a feeling that cannot possibly be adequately expressed here. But, it forever reinforced our belief that the personal college follow-up, where possible, is a very needed and very necessary part of any and all pre-college training programs. My personal reasons for feeling this way have, I believe, been adequately presented in the preceeding pages.

Arnold was having no particular difficulty at the time of our visit. The class schedule was manageable and he was a member of the freshman football team. Financial assistance had also been quite adequate. He did experience difficulty later in the term and voluntarily left the football team to concentrate on his studies. Upon successfully completing the freshman year, Arnold applied and was employed as a residence advisor in the boys' dorm during last years Wayne State Upward Bound summer program. He did a very fine job and now he is presently completing his sophomore year of college.

Specific Problems and Areas of Concern:

The problems confronting those so labeled as "culturally different youth in college" are in most respects no different than those problems confronting any other group of students presently enrolled in a college or university. If so, certainly one of the biggest problems is the simple fact that too much time is usually spent in concentrating on their differences and too little time thinking about their similarities in relation to all students.

Granted the environmental circumstances of their lives has in many ways placed a multiplicity of students at a distinct disadvantage. Color and racial distinction plus the prevailing structure of a class conscious society can also be congratulated for making a major assist.

Generally speaking, however, most of our students and other students with whom we have spoken while visiting a college campus--be they black or white, rich or poor, from the inner-city of Detroit or the outer limits of sunny California--all seemingly see themselves as being engaged in, perhaps, the biggest fight of their lives. Here, I refer to a unity of purpose to meet and successfully defeat the challenge of the system.

Consequently, in talking with Upward Bound students who elected to go away to school, as well as keeping in close touch with those who remain on the local scene, the often repeated questions: "How is it going?" or "What appears to be the most serious problem or problems with which you have thus far been confronted?" has usually resulted in the following replies:

"Most of my classes are just too dull and boring while most of my instructors are just too stiff, bold and unorganized. They are also either unwilling or unable to admit when they have been proven wrong. They don't give you any credit for being able to think and use your own mind."

Mable, Class of "68" and a slightly better than average student in graduating from an inner-city Detroit high school, admits that she could have done much better in a five hour history course had her instructor been better organized. "He talked about everything but what he should have been talking about...mostly about student dress, student behavior, and the lack of quality in the campus newspaper. Furthermore, he was always too busy after class and seldom in his office to answer questions about assignments. Besides, he tries to fail all black students so I just stopped trying and decided to do just enough to get by and to get out of his course."

Mable apparently did more than just enough to get by in most of her classes because she earned a 2.7 cumulative in her first semester as a major in Special Education--Emotionally Disturbed. A recent letter addressed to Mr. Hopkins and myself leads us to believe that she continues to do well and is reportedly blessed with "bold" but interesting and sincerely concerned instructors this semester.

Unrealistic scheduling of classes remain one of the major causes of student difficulties. James and Leon were unable to see their advisor until the third and fourth week of the semester. Both students had graduated from high school with a fair "C" average but had high interest and strong

grades in science. Test scores also revealed high potential in this area.

At the time of our fall visit, they were found to be enrolled in the following classes:

James		Leon	
English 101 R	3 hours	Chemistry	4 hours
Chemistry 121	5 "	Eng. Comp.	3 "
Biology 121	4 "	Analytical Geom. & Pre-college Cal.	4 "
Math 121	4 "	Structure of Amer. Society	3 "
Orientation	1 "	Math Science	1 "
Phys. Ed.	1/2 "	Phys. Ed.	1/2 "
	17-1/2 hours		15-1/2 hours.

Traditionally, the counselors in our program encourage all graduating seniors to take a balanced class load of twelve hours. Preferably one or two of the basic requirements to be complimented with other courses that may not be quite so demanding.

As a pharmacy major, James was already in danger of failing both his math and biology classes. Leon was found following in his footsteps. The schedule was just too much for a first effort. As a result of being unable to spend time with an interested and knowledgeable advisor each student had simply followed the departmental outline. Here, of course, all freshmen majoring in a particular field of study are encouraged to take the recommended sequence of courses. This method is time saving and popular. It is also poison to most students who must make a cumulative 2.0 as a first effort or be denied the continuation of financial assistance. In this respect, too many

non-credit courses also tend to lessen the student's chances of survival.

Though somewhat briefly touched upon in this presentation, my point in mentioning the above is to further emphasize the need and necessity for institutions recruiting students by way of special programs to become considerably more concerned about what happens to them once they are on campus. Here, of course, I refer to the institution's responsibility for implementing a positive support program to assist students through what we have come to call "the days of doubting and defeat."

Inability to communicate remains a critical area. Clarence, in attending a large major institution was overwhelmed by the large classes and doubly large number in his lecture sections. As a sharpe but shy, retiring student, it was difficult for him to ask questions when he needed answers or to speak out when he knew the right response. After a disheartening year, he is presently working to help out at home and to save money for attendance at a junior college next fall.

Undoubtedly the most prevalent attitudinal problem confronting our students appears to be their fear of failure, primarily attributable to the poor concept of self. Here, I am reminded of Mildred, Class of "67", who, in speaking to our staff and student representatives at an orientation meeting prior to starting last year's summer program, recalled how insecure she was in her first semester as a college freshman. At the end of the first term, however, she had passed all of her classes while her white roommate from suburbia had failed three of five subjects. Both

students were secondary education majors. Mildren's fear, however, was feeling less prepared because she had graduated from an inner-city high school with only a "C" average. Besides, she had heard more than once that students from the ghetto were not expected to do well in life let alone in college. Mildred will complete her sophomore year this June.

Class attendance remains a common problem to many students. Robert, a very able student had an attendance problem in high school, but it caught up with him in college. Two term reports showed an "X" for each class indicating an unofficial withdrawl due to non-attendance. He could not find himself a reason and now Uncle Sam has given him a number.

Long range goal planning is difficult to accept. Immediate needs, most of which require money, must be satisfied now, not after graduation. The attempt is too frequently made to work full-time and also keep up in the classroom. The reasons are often legitimate with one of them being to help out at home. The result however, is perhaps best described as committing academic suicide. This proves to be especially true when this position is pursued in the freshman year of college. Grades go down, financial assistance is lost, and the student is confronted with a lay-off from the job. Now, he is out of work, out of school and out on the corner. Frequently, the gang once again becomes his family and the street corner becomes his home. Next stop---United States Army. Even so, effort must be made to keep in touch, and the door to the office must remain open, because this person may still be receptive and able to benefit from those services

offered by the program.

Marriage during the sophomore year has occured on infrequent occasions. Now, the problems are multiplied; for in addition to the usual ups and downs associated with the early marriage, the situation is further complicated by the student's need for steady employment and now, more than ever, to pursue educational ambitions. The need or desire to transfer from one university to another also frequently prevails. Financial assistance then becomes a question mark.

Militancy and the movement to demonstrate black pride, while demanding the implementation of a Black Studies Program and the addition of black staff members to the college faculty, has certainly caused considerable concern. Over-involvement in the campus Association of Black Students has also presented many students with serious problems by causing them to fall so far behind in their work it becomes impossible to catch up or to remain at the institution in good standing.

Here, we spend considerable time in suggesting the student establish priorities. Further, to remind each person so involved that they will give the best support to themselves and to the above cause by completing their education and assisting others to do the same.

It frequently becomes somewhat difficult for our students to completely accept our position on this particular subject partly because of peer group loyalty and also because demonstrations are fashionable...a recognized trend of the times. It becomes even more difficult, however, as they are

confronted with unfair and many times unnecessary housing problems, both in the campus dormitory and the community, that have visible racial overtones.

Along this same line of thought, the actions of campus security is said to frequently contribute to the cause of student difficulty as they usually appear "out to get the blacks" or "that they must keep all black students (especially those who gather in groups of two or more) under close surveillance at all times."

Moreover, Wilson, Class of "67", is reminded by his Speech instructor that no black student has ever earned more than a "C" in his class because blacks cannot speak as fluently as whites.

Over three hundred black students are arrested following a peaceful, non-destructive, sit-in demonstration and forced to spend all night and most of the following day in jail. Parents are not notified, a fine is imposed but the students have no legal representation until half have been before the bench and no one is present from the University to speak in their behalf or to show the University's concern. Further, the college president views the situation as a police matter and therefore completely out of his hands. He consequently cannot find time to talk with the forty or fifty parents who heard about the situation and found their way to the institution.

Regardless of personal opinion in light of the above, many black students appear to come out of this kind of situation with a greater sense of unity and often a more determined desire to make it. It is not unusual

to see a greater concern as to why many black students arrive on campus in the fall and so few remain in the spring. Though somewhat dependent on group objectives, and the extent of individual involvement, many students appear to realize that they still must "go for themselves." Consequently, it becomes "different strokes for different folks."

Joshua, Class of "67", whose home burned down and himself jailed during the Detroit riot, does well as the recipient of a music scholarship at a major university.

Lance, Class of "68", deeply involved in the movement and a "D" student at graduation earns a 3.0 cumulative for his first efforts as an art major at a major institution.

Walter, a campus activist and talented "D" student at graduation who made it on time only with a special arrangement enabling his counselor to accept credit earned with Upward Bound, maintained a 3.5 cumulative as a freshman. A Journalism major, he also initiated and served as editor of a campus magazine. He was recently cited as one of the outstanding students on campus.

Recommendations:

1. Culturally different youth on the college campus must be thought of in terms of their similarities to other students, rather than in terms of their differences. All students should be judged individually and perceived in terms of their needs.

-- 2. Greater accountability and sincere concern must be directed towards what happens to those students so regarded as culturally different youth once they become a member of the college or university family.

-- 3. The implementation of strong "compensatory support program" to compliment college and university recruitment efforts is of vital importance and a must for the committed institution of higher learning.

-- 4. There is a definite need and necessity for pre-college programs in general and Upward Bound programs in particular to provide a positive and personal college follow-up. This, I believe, is especially important during the student's freshman year of college. Here, a "Campus Contact" is of tremendous importance.

-- 5. Institutions actively recruiting and admitting students by way of special programs must commit financial assistance for the first year regardless of grade point average. Too often, students admitted under the above circumstances are denied a continuation of financial aid after completing their first term if the grade point average falls below a 2.0.

-- 6. Sincere counseling and realistic class schedules for the first efforts of culturally different youth remain one of the major areas in which greater attention must be focused.

-- 7. The need and necessity for planning and accepting long range goals, plus the practicality of fighting from within the system, must be consistently emphasized. The survival of culturally different youth in general and black students in particular depends primarily on their ability to manipulate the existing system of the institution.